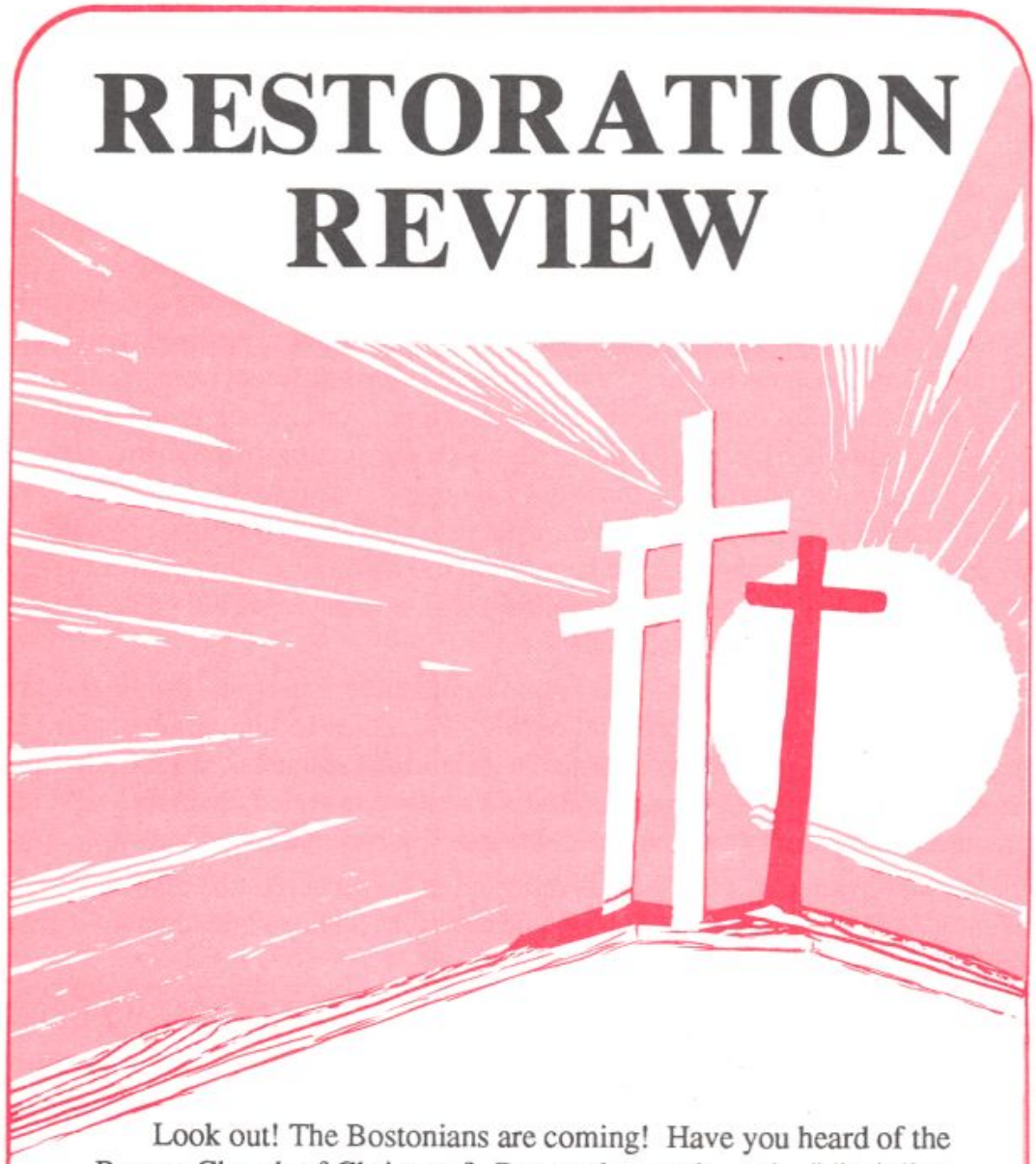
RESTORATION REVIEW



Look out! The Bostonians are coming! Have you heard of the Boston Church of Christ yet? Do you know about the "discipling ministry?" Or maybe you have heard them called the "Crossroads Movement?" If you haven't heard, you soon will. What are these churches?--David M. Bayless in *Christian Standard.*

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Volume 32, No. 6 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **June, 1990**

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The Hope of the Believer … No. 16

"ONE LITTLE WORD SHALL FELL HIM"

By grace you have been saved through faith. and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.—Eph. 2:8

One value in reading Martin Luther is that he does not let us forget who our enemy is. As a boy growing up in the Churches of Christ I was led to believe that "the denominations" were the enemy. It was awhile before I realized that it is not my sisters and brothers in Christ, those who hold views different from my own, that were the enemy but one far more sinister and dangerous. Back in those days we presumed that when we debated our brethren we were taking on the enemy. It is just as well that we are outgrowing those days, though some of that spirit is still around. To say the least, it is important, if we are going to "fight the good fight of faith," that we know who the enemy is. We have spent too much time flaying away at each other. Martin Luther knew who the enemy was, and he would tell you at the drop of a hat, and he would drop the hat!

Luther seemed to know Satan as one would know a person. To him the devil was a personal enemy, indeed *the* enemy. He talked to him, argued with him, badgered him, and defied him. Armed with spiritual resources, the reformer took on the old deceiver with abandon. It was a warfare in which, "with the right man on our side," he always won even if he lost a few battles along the way.

Luther's crucible with Satan is reflected in his great hymns, especially in "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" in which he describes Satan as "our ancient foe who seeks to do us woe."

The third verse of that hymn is particularly to the point, and since it is the basis for this essay, we present it here in its entirety:

And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The Prince of Darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,

For lo, his doom is sure;
One little word shall fell him.

It is evident that Luther found Satan awesome. He was an enemy to be feared and respected for all his mighty power. Satan was not only the Prince of Darkness, but as he said in the first verse of that hymn:

His craft and power are great,
And, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Since we have such an enemy as that, it is well that we be acquainted with his devices —"the wiles of the devil" as Eph. 6:11 puts it. Luther realized as few Christians do, that we are in a war that rages furiously. You can count on it that he often referred to 1 Pet. 5:8: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." That passage always reminds me of one of C. S. Lewis' illustrations about how apathetic Christians are toward the ever-present enemy who would devour them. It is like a woman at a garden party, Lewis noted, who, being told that there was a lion loose in the area, responded, "Really?," as she took another bite of her cucumber salad.

But Luther was confident of victory over Satan, one of the great themes of the book of Revelation. In that apocalyptic vision it is Satan who persecuted Christians and cast them into prison (2:10), and he is full of great wrath because he knows his time is short (12:9). He will at last be bound and cast into a pit (20:2) and into a lake that bums with fire and brimstone (20:10).

Luther sounds that victory in the last line of his hymn in a surprising way: *One little word shall fell him.* One little word! Even though Satan is the prince of demons (Mt. 12:24) and the ruler of the darkness of this age (Eph. 6:12), one little word will fell him. Luther does not tell us in the hymn what that word is, but from his life and teaching we may conclude that one word that will fell Satan is grace.

Here lies an important part of the Christian's living hope, that she is not only saved by grace but that she may live by grace. And in God's grace she is sustained and protected. We can defy the devil like Luther did, "Begone, Satan, for I am shielded by the grace of God." Or like our Lord did, "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Mt. 16:23). It is a remarkable

fact that in our Lord's sojourn on this earth he frequently conversed with Satan. But he knew that he held the trump card in his struggle against the evil one. He had God's grace on his side. He was in fact God's grace in the flesh.

That is the way Paul puts it in Tit. 2:11: "The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men." In coming to this world of sin and suffering Jesus was indeed the grace of God in human flesh. Paul says it similarly in 2 Cor. 8:9: "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich."

We are rich! All because of God's grace. That grace is not of ourselves but God's free gift to us. Paul is telling Timothy that every person is saved by that free grace. He only needs to accept it, but accept it he must. That is why Eph. 2:8 says that we are saved by grace through faith. Everyone will therefore be saved except those who persistently and finally reject the grace of God. Faith and baptism are the God-ordained way of our responding to that free grace.

Since I began writing this piece I had occasion to talk with a man who has had a serious drinking problem for many years. He wanted to know if an old sot like him could be saved. I told him of the good news in Tit. 2:11, that God's grace in the person of Jesus Christ has saved all mankind. "You are already saved," I assured him, "if you will but accept it." But overcoming his drinking problem seemed impossible, he pitifully told me. "Can I go to heaven a drunkard?," he asked.

I explained that no one will go to heaven because he is sober, but because he has cast himself upon God's mercy. Pray the sinner's prayer, I urged, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" It is in God's grace that you will find help with your drinking problem, I said. Start with the good news that God loves you as you are (period!), drunk or sober, I told him, and that his grace has already made you rich. Only accept it! Those in poverty are those who persistently refuse to draw upon the account that God has opened for them in heaven.

Wow, what good news that is! Grace! That is the one word, the one great truth, that fells Satan and gives us the victory. God's wonderful grace —grace that is greater than all our sins— has one glaring limitation. It cannot do anything for the person who presumes he has no need of it. Grace cannot reach the person who is trapped in the prison of pride and self-sufficiency. Grace is there for those who recognize their need.

The good news for the Christian is that she is not only saved by grace but she may live by grace. This is not some vague influence, but the living presence of Jesus Christ. When we invite Jesus to make his home in our heart, we are setting up housekeeping to live by grace. This is far more than living by religious rules (even though we need rules), for it is God himself coming near us —comforting us, inspiring us, empowering us. Only in Christ can we see what it means to live by grace. He takes us beyond a life of weary obligations. He went to the cross so that we might have grace, and that grace means abundant joy.

There is no way for us to deserve his loving grace. We can't buy it. We can't earn it. We can't be good enough to attain it. Grace means that he accepts us as we are, warts and all. It is God's free gift. He doesn't check any record to see what our score has been. Living by grace means that "God has made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6). Rom. 5:2 says it triumphantly, "Through Christ we have access into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." We stand (or live) by grace because Christ has given us access to the Father. Access to the Father and his grace! What a glorious hope we have!

While we ask, like my drunk friend, if we are good enough for heaven, grace says that no one is good enough for heaven. But that is all right in that Jesus Christ has made the difference.

Living by grace saves us from judging our neighbors by some moral scale on which we presume to rank near the top. Grace frees us to see our own faults more than those of our neighbors, and to lay them at the foot of the cross.

Living by grace is more than praying, reading the Bible, and going to church, for it is seeing and living the whole of life —our work, our family, our nation, even our enemies— in the presence of God. It is practicing the presence of God in everyday life. It is putting on the armor of God and withstanding the fiery darts of the evil one.

Luther was right. One word will do it. —*the Editor*

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Heroes and Reformers of History … No. 6

MISSIONARY HEROES

Since we live in an age in which the Christian faith has penetrated virtually every nation in the world, we may forget that it has been that way for only a few generations. If a Martian had come to our world in the early 19th century, he would have supposed that Christianity was a tribal religion confined mostly to the white people of Europe and North America. While there were some earlier missions, it was not until the 19th century that the Christian churches became really missionary minded and began to reach out into all the world.

That is why church historians have called the 19th century "the Great Century" and have named it as the greatest century in the history of the church. This was when Christians penetrated dark Africa, south of the Sahara, for the first time, and set up missions all across India. While some inroads had been made by Roman Catholics in China and Japan, they were now joined by substantial Protestant missionary efforts.

In this installment of reformers and heroes I want to make out a kind of honor roll of those who made "the Great Century" what it was in the history of the church.

Bible and Missionary Societies

Among the heroes that made Christianity a world religion in the 19th century were those who created and supported Bible and missionary societies. Nothing supported Christian outreach more than the circulation of the Scriptures in the language of people who had never before heard the gospel. The British and Foreign Bible Society alone put into circulation almost 204 million copies of Bibles, Testaments, and portions of Scripture during the Great Century —about two million copies per year!

During this time there were scores of Bible societies. In 1816 thirty-one of them united to form the American Bible Society. There were societies in Scotland and Germany, and in 1816 the Russian Bible Society was formed. Since most all the Bibles or portions thereof were published "without note or comment," the societies were sometimes an example of Christian unity. But they had their problems. When a British Baptist missionary applied to the American Bible Society for a New Testament to be used among Bengalis in India, he requested that "immerse" be used for "baptize." Since the ABS saw this as denominational interpretation, he was refused, so the Baptists withdrew and formed their own society in 1836. As to whether the Apocrypha was to be part of the Bible, accepted as canonical by Roman Catholics but not by Protestants, was another problem.

But the work of disseminating the Scriptures went on with phenomenal success. There were finally thousands of societies and auxiliaries all over the world issuing hundreds of millions of Bibles and portions thereof, and they eventually put the Scriptures into 1,549 different languages of the world! These are unsung heroes in the history of the church.

Missionary societies were also a strong force in transforming Christianity into a world church during this century. At the outset of the 19th century the church argued over three forms of church government -- episcopal, presbyterian, congregational- and the dispute led to both schism and bloodshed. A few daring souls realized that none of these forms of polity enabled the churc~ to embark on a world mission, so they started what amounted to another form of church government, a voluntary organization designed for world mission. The first one was in England and was called the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and another was called the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

In time most every denomination had a society. They were usually independent of central control and were able to be ecumenical in their outreach. Women, who were otherwise denied ministry, were often able to work through these societies. Laymen were often leaders. Even dissenters and seceders could work within these societies when they were not accepted elsewhere. And the societies were usually freer of sectarianism. The London Missionary Society made it its fundamental principle that it would not send out any particular form of church government to the heathen but only “the glorious gospel of the blessed God.”

In time the major denominations became very supportive of the societies. In 1818 the Methodist Conference made every member of the church a member of the Methodist Missionary Society. But they had recruitment problems since settled pastors did not, with few exceptions, want to be missionaries. So most of the early recruits were craftsmen and tradesmen, the main qualifications being spirituality and common sense. Many of them met with disaster out in the mission field “Culture shock” they called it-and returned home. The problem was partly solved by the training of “native ministers” who preached to their own people. Some staffs in Africa were made up entirely of native missionaries.

Young college graduates also made effective missionaries. The “Cambridge Seven,” as they came to be known, graduated from the university and set out for China under the aegis of a society. Hundreds of other college youth did likewise, going into all the world. They set up schools, hospitals, leper compounds. Some assignments, especially in Arab

nations, proved almost impossible. Robert Bruce, a missionary to Persia (Iran), wrote home that he had no harvest and could hardly plant seed, but "I am gathering out the stones, and that too is missionary work."

During this century of evangelistic zeal some of the great missionary heroes emerged and changed not only the face of the church but the geographical and cultural center of the world itself. Because of their sacrifices it could be said of them too, "of whom the world was not worthy." We name a few of them.

William Carey

When I was recently in India, near Calcutta, it was my honor to visit the grave of William Carey, a missionary in India for more than 40 years. He was only 32 when he went to India and never returned to his native England. I first visited Serampore College, which he helped found in 1820, then took a ricksha to his ill kept grave in an abandoned cemetery. I remembered that he was an exception when the call went out among the English Baptists for settled pastors to volunteer for foreign missions. That may be because he was a self-educated cobbler turned minister. As pastor of a small Baptist church he supported himself by teaching and shoemaking. In India he also supported himself by working as a foreman of an indigo factory.

Carey had a motto that was a favorite of Alexander Campbell, and it may help explain why both Carey and Campbell were effective in their particular calling: "Expect great things from God, attempt great things, and great things will happen." Carey studied oriental languages and was able to translate the New Testament into Bengali, an Indian language. Besides founding a college, he built mission schools and organized a society that promoted agricultural improvement. He was instrumental in abolishing the burning of widows, and ancient Indian custom. In the spread of the gospel he was a pioneer in using native preachers.

David Livingstone

David Livingstone, born in Scotland in 1813, was a missionary statesman and explorer in southern Africa for almost 30 years. He suffered incredible hardship in both exploration and evangelism. He literally walked all the way across Africa from west to east, taking notes on his findings. He "discovered" Victoria Falls in that he was the first white man to ever see it, and he named it for his queen. He led an exhibition down the Zambezi river, calling it "God's highway into the interior" of Africa. He preferred to explore with natives,

believing them to be tougher. He was the first white man the Africans had ever seen and they referred to him as “the Christian.” When he at last died deep in the bowels of Africa it was black men who bore his body back to the coast.

Livingstone sought to drain the “open sore of Africa” —the Arab slave trade —and it was here he proved himself a missionary statesman. He believed the only way to uproot the slave trade was by economic substitution: for Africa to export raw materials rather than slaves. He worked for what came to be known as the “Three C’s” - Christianity, commerce, and civilization. He believed that the interests of all three lay in the same direction. He proved to be right when tribal chiefs conceded that the mission-sponsored cotton industry brought more benefits than the slave trade. Livingstone was a missionary who taught the church that taking the good news to a heathen nation involved much more than caring for spiritual needs.

Samuel Adjai Crowther

This black man, captured as a boy by slave raiders, lived almost all of the 19th century, 1806-1891, and he helped to make it the great century for the church that it was. He was the century’s outstanding native African Christian leader, and he became the first Anglican African bishop. That could hardly have been anticipated when he at 15 was kidnaped from his home in Yorubaland (now Nigeria) and put on a slave ship. But the slave ship was intercepted by a British warship. He was taken to Sierra Leone where he was converted and baptized. He excelled in school and became a teacher for the Church Missionary Society, which eventually sent him to evangelize in his own Yorubaland.

Crowther was convinced that Africans should be evangelized by Africans, so he trained other blacks to assist him in his mission. Among his first converts were his long-lost mother and sister. He became a translator and a negotiator for peace as well as a preacher. He and his all-black staff operated over hundreds of miles of the Niger territories, taking the gospel to those who had never heard it.

There were of course many other heroes in that great missionary century, such as Hudson Taylor, whose great concern was to take the gospel to every province of China, a missionary who worked as an independent apart from any society and who relied strictly upon prayer, never requesting financial help. He insisted upon respecting native customs and always dressed in Chinese clothes. Neither would he allow “home-control” of his missions but placed them in the hands of the Chinese natives.

These heroes were pioneers in taking the gospel to pagan nations that may one day be the leading Christian nations of the world. It is anticipated that there will in the not too distant future be more Christians in India and Africa than in all the Western world. They may one day be evangelizing us! What a debt we owe to these our brethren who dared to venture into unlikely places almost two centuries ago! —*the Editor*

> I place no value on anything I have or may possess, except in relation to the kingdom of Christ. If anything will advance the interests of the kingdom, it shall be given away or kept, only as by giving or keeping it. I shall most promote the glory of Him to whom I owe all my hopes in time and eternity. —*David Livingstone*

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Boston Church of Christ …

BOSTONIANS IN DALLAS: YUPPIES AGLOW

The “Boston” church in Minneapolis, which wears the name of the Tri-Cities Church of Christ is apparently disbanding and going out of business. Not because it has had no success, but perhaps because it has had too much of the wrong kind. Though it was only a few years old, it was with its 300 or more members one of our largest congregations in the north. But it had a revolving door problem, with people enthusiastically entering the front door and disappointingly exiting out the back. The demise of the Tri -Cities work stemmed in part from a bad press. Their “image” of being a regimenting, manipulating cult became such a problem that the leaders decided to fold their tents and move on, advising the faithful to relocate in Chicago if possible.

The media had a heyday. TV talk shows presented disenchanted former members who told of how the church attempted to program their lives. Students reported that they were told whom to date and not date. A psychologist revealed that he had been employed by parents to “deprogram” their children who were pressured into the church while in school. In some cases the students were actually kidnapped and deprogrammed.

What surprises me about this development, which I learned about when in Minneapolis recently, is that our Boston brethren allowed such adverse publicity to faze them in the least. They usually interpret such opposition as “Book of Acts” persecution and go right on growing and glowing. This is the first time I know of that one of their churches has called it quits. So there may be factors at work that I do not know about.

They are usually anything but quitters. In the past decade they have grown to something like 25,000 members in about 75 churches in 27 nations of the world. A new church will typically baptize at least 100 the first year, and by the time it is three years old it will have upwards of 300 members. The leading church in Boston began with 30 members (after splitting over the new approach) in 1979. Today about 3500 members meet in Boston Gardens. The second leading church, the Chicago Church of Christ, baptized 1000 people in 1988 alone, and in that same year sent out 52 workers to evangelize in six urban centers. A “pillar” church, such as San Francisco, may send as many as twenty or thirty workers to Singapore or Calcutta. If they cannot enter a country as missionaries, they will go as students, enrolling in the universities.

A decade or more ago in Charleston, Illinois, I was personally involved in one instance when Boston “turned the world upside down.” They claim to be right out of the book of Acts, so yes, turmoil might follow in their train. I was in Charleston to work with a student group sponsored by Christian Churches. I had previously ministered to the Heritage Chapel Church of Christ in that town that later became part of the Boston program (or “Crossroads” it was then called). They had invaded Eastern Illinois University and had the campus in an uproar. Some students had withdrawn from school in order to escape their pressure tactics. Some who joined the church complained that their lives were so regimented that they could no longer do their school work. They had to get clearance for anyone they dated or associated with. The administration was up in arms and the ministerial association posted notices on campus warning against the “cult” and offering help.

I heard one student’s story, who, though she considered herself a Christian, was led to believe that this new church would bring her closer to Christ. She soon found herself so controlled by her new associates that she at last sought escape, which she found difficult. They laid a guilt trip on her, telling her she would go to hell if she turned back. She was not even to visit her parents, who were members of the Christian Church, and she was told that they were lost. She became emotionally distraught as did a number of other students. Liberation itself was a traumatic experience.

I have continued to receive similar reports through the years. One evangelist that I eminently trust wrote me recently from Toronto: “Up here they are very legalistic and dogmatic. They are very sectarian and do not recognize as Christians any other brand of Church of Christ. They are a cult here.” The mainline Churches of Christ have been almost paranoid in their opposition, publishing numerous books and articles, conducting seminars, and running newspaper ads exposing the Boston church as unscriptural, apostate, and cultish. When Boston “hit the ground running” in Atlanta, 27 congregations in the area ran an “Open Letter To The Boston Church of Christ” in the *Atlanta Journal* disassociating themselves from them and announcing that “We will do all within our power to deter others from becoming involved” in their movement.

In Dallas a letter was circulated among the Churches of Christ warning that the Bostonians were in town. A prominent minister used a Sunday morning sermon to detail their heresies and to warn his members to stay away. The Boston folk probably appreciated the free advertising!

While they have generally been united and a peace among themselves in their recent years of growing and glowing, they had their problems earlier on. The mother church in Gainesville, F1. (Crossroads), along with some 15 other congregations, disassociated themselves from Boston once that church gained the ascendency, mainly over questions of authority and polity.

While the mainline Churches of Christ present one side of the picture, it is only fair to acknowledge that there is another side, which I saw when I visited the Princeton (N.J.) Church of Christ two years ago and only a few weeks ago the Dallas-Ft. Worth Church of Christ Jesus. You will notice the name change of the latter congregation, the only instance, I believe, in America at least, where “Church of Christ” has not been used by this group. In this area they found the “Church of Christ” name an obstacle to their mission, thus the slight name change.

When I was a student at Princeton a generation ago and working among churches in New Jersey, we could only dream of having a congregation in that university-seminary city. A Church of Christ was at last started but it struggled for decades. When it accepted part of the Boston program - the methodology and personnel but not the hierarchal structure (It is not listed as a bona fide Boston church, I think) —it began to grow so rapidly that it was discussed among the Presbyterian clergy when I was back at Princeton Seminary for an alumni gathering. I was eager for Sunday to come so that I could visit and see for myself.

The moment I stepped inside the building it was apparent that it was no ordinary Church of Christ. People were everywhere, blacks and whites alike, and they were excited and happy. A black brother led the singing and he really reved it up. Worship was a celebration. There was no ordinary Sunday School. While the children repaired to classes, the adults remained in the assembly room for a service that lasted upwards of two hours. There was teaching, preaching, singing (acappella), reading, praising, and of course Communion. Lots of enthusiasm. The teaching was strongly biblical and the preaching was urgent. I learned that they had house meetings through the week, the hallmark of all growing churches. And that was Princeton where I supposed a Church of Christ could never flourish!

As for my visit to the DFW church, I arrived at the classy hotel where it was to meet almost two hours early, and took my seat in the lobby awaiting the action. Sure enough, it was not long before I was approached by one of the workers, inviting me to the service. He happened to be a former mainline Church of Christ missionary, sent out by one of the prominent churches in Dallas. He told me how he told the Dallas elders his story, that he was leaving and joining the Boston church where he could really do evangelistic work. They gave him their blessings. He was re- trained in Boston and eventually sent to DFW. All that is fine with me, but when he and others tell me that they were rebaptized and that they were not really Christians until Boston came along, it is difficult for me to take. A Church of Christ missionary to Australia for years and not a Christian!

I must have talked with a dozen former members of the mainline Church of Christ that day, some having served as elders for many years and some preachers, and they all had been rebaptized by the Boston church and only then became Christians, they said. There was only one unpleasant experience, when I questioned a former longtime elder in a south Texas church. “I can see why this church would appeal to you,” I said to him, “but why be rebaptized? You were not a Christian all those years that you were an elder?” I didn’t intend to offend him, but he didn’t like it. He started thumbing through his Bible, justifying his action. I got a small taste of their persistency. He wanted to come to Denton and prove to me the rightness of his action, which I did not encourage.

They talk about “Lordship” baptism, but when the apostle Peter (1 Pet. 3:15) urged believers to reverence Christ in their hearts as Lord, which they might not have been doing, he did not call for their rebaptism. If we are baptized every time we experience a new or deeper walk with Christ, we render the ordinance meaningless.

But overall I have to give the DFW and the Boston church high marks. They are doing what the rest of us only talk about. They had about 700 there that Sunday a.m., mostly visitors. After some three years of ground work they had about 125 members by the time of their inaugural service. They started 15 minutes late, which is typical of avant garde churches (Traditional churches start and close on time!), and they went for about two hours. Like Princeton, the adults were all in the spacious ballroom while children (lots of them) were parceled out according to age in other parts of the hotel.

When they started they came on like Gang Busters. Five song leaders, black and white but all male, spread out across the front of the large room and began leading heart songs, some of which were Boston edited, such as “This mega-light of mine, I’m going to let it shine.” And did they ever rev it up! It reminded me of a college basketball homecoming game with cheer leaders rallying the troops and cheering on the team. They praised the Lord with such vigor that there was no way for heaven not to notice. We all stood for 20 minutes, clapping our hands and praising God. It was for real. But it was not what we call “charismatic.” I had no problem at all in getting fully involved. These were my sisters and brothers, mostly Yuppies (I may have been the oldest person there and there were only a handful anywhere near my age), and I fell immediately in love with them all.

I was impressed when they announced that the offering would be for the poor. A midweek offering is for local needs. Since they rent the space they need, usually in a hotel, they have no building to pay for or maintain. They can move from smaller to larger hotels at will, and they don’t have to lug hymnals from place to place. Each family has its own hymnal (Boston arranged) and brings it to meeting along with a Bible, even though they sing mostly from memory, and I do mean sing!

They were excited, committed, and in love with each other. I saw a radiance in their faces that is all too rare in our staid churches. I really went for it! But I also go for a quiet, dignified Episcopal service where they kneel on rails to pray and take the Eucharist on their knees. The Boston brethren may not yet realize how diverse worship can be in different churches all around the world, reflecting cultural differences, and yet all be pleasing to God —depending on what is taking place in the heart! Where I have a problem is in many of our Churches of Christ where we often look bored and unattentive and sit in our pews and address the God of heaven as if he were a bell hop. But I’m not leaving, either for the Episcopalians or the Bostonians. I believe God has let me down where he wants me. But if you visit them they will be after you.

The sermon went on and on, almost an hour, but it was well done, being an urgent appeal for repentance, drawn from the story of the Prodigal Son. The young, handsome evangelist observed that people caught up in all sorts of sins are in the hog pens of this world and need to repent and come home to a forgiving Father, but so do those that are in dead churches. He made discipling (winning souls) and being discipled (nourished and discipled by other believers), which is at the heart of Boston theology, essential to being a Christian. “If you are in a church where you are not discipled, you should run, not walk, away from such a church,” he forcefully’ declared. You can’t just “be a member” and “go to church” and be a Christian. If you are lukewarm, if you are not a disciple, if you are not committed, you are not a Christian, he insisted.

I demurred on one point in particular. Those who are spiritual do not necessarily have to leave a “dead” church (Who makes this judgment?). It may be where God wants them. The church at Sardis was called “dead” by the Lord (Rev. 3), but there were some who had not defiled their garments and were “worthy,” and the Lord did not tell them to leave. Neither am I sure that every Christian is called to be a “disciple” as interpreted by Boston.

This is where renewal movements like Boston have an advantage over traditional churches. Most churches appear to be dead or dying, and most Christians seem to be lukewarm with little or no real commitment. But there are many in such churches that want a change, who would with some encouragement take religion seriously. These are the ones that are attracted to the Boston call for repentance, commitment, and discipleship. Mainline churches are threatened by such an onslaught of zeal and dedication. A Boston congregation will do more growing in a year than a mainline church does in ten or twenty years. The Boston brethren can say with some justification when other Churches of Christ criticize them, “We’re practicing what you’ve been preaching all these years.”

Most criticisms of the Boston church by the mainline churches are over matters of opinion and methods, not over basics of the faith. They criticize their practice of evangelistic authority, which comes with poor grace from people dominated by “elder authority.” They criticize their polity, insisting that “pillar churches” (that supervise other churches) are not scriptural, but Boston points out, correctly I believe, that their arrangement is as scriptural as a radical congregationalism where churches have little or no contact with each other. An Abilene professor has even ventured to psychoanalyze them, suggesting that they are of a particular psychological mindset. The Boston folk only need to respond, “Professor, psychoanalyze thyself!”

Anyone who supposes that there is something "wrong" with these brethren would do well to take another look. In Dallas I met an engineer, a geophysicist, a doctor, a nurse — all young, intelligent, prosperous, and beautifully committed to the Lord. They are willing to go anywhere in the world to serve Christ, and that is exactly what many of them do, whether to Buenos Aires, Singapore, or Hong Kong, often at their own expense. But everything is voluntary, with no one forced to do anything. When I asked them about the charge of manipulation, control, and highhanded tactics, they readily conceded that they have made mistakes in their earlier days and were not doing those things anymore. Since they eventually lose about 40% of the ones they baptize (which means they keep 60%, a high average according to church growth experts) it is understandable that they would get some bad press from some highly critical former members, who are usually the ones the media interviews. They seldom interview those who stay and who affirm with joy, "I didn't know what it was to be a Christian until I found this church."

As for fallout, there is a Church of Christ in Burlington, Mass. that was started for the purpose of ministering to Boston dropouts. The preacher, Jim Woodruff, has a loving attitude toward the Boston church, and the leaders of the Boston church reciprocate in kind. They appear to accept the fact that they are not for everybody.

What I hear most of the critics in Churches of Christ say of the Boston church is something like, "Don't be so different and on fire, come back home and be 'normal' like the rest of us. Or else get lost." They should rather be judged by their fruit. They are not preaching another gospel, but Jesus Christ and him crucified. They go to the streets, the malls, the workplace, the parks, even bars (but not door to door) to invite folk to their homes (or to the assembly) for Bible study. They introduce them to Jesus in the Gospel of John, then to Acts, then to the epistles. They show them how to be a disciple, "each one teach one," and to be discipled (caring for each other's souls). They are effective in working out marriage and family problems. They are often together in each other's homes. They love each other and stand by one another.

In their assemblies they lift up Jesus Christ, praising him as the Lord of glory. They preach and teach only from the holy Scriptures. They wear only the name of Christ. They break bread together each Lord's day and sing acappella (but make no point of it). They are of us, born of us, and we should not disenfranchise them. We can disagree without drawing lines. As our pioneers have urged us, we should judge each other only in terms of the Spirit of Christ, not on methodology or differences in interpretation. As I have indicated, there are things about the Boston work that concern me, some rather seriously,

but I nonetheless see the Spirit of Christ in their work, so I say more power to them. We can all be wrong about some things, as we all surely are, and yet be right where it really counts, in reference to Jesus Christ.

The best treatment I have read of the Boston work appeared not in the Church of Christ press, but, oddly enough, in a Christian Church publication, the *Christian Standard.* The writer, a missionary to Brazil who did his homework on the Boston movement, points to weaknesses, such as their doctrine of rebaptism and their failure to develop diverse talents by making everyone a preacher, he praises them for their zeal to reach the lost, which includes a goal to reach all the world in this generation. He admires their insistence on accountability (You cannot be a member of the Boston church and not be an accountable disciple of Jesus), and he concedes that there is a narrow line between "control" and accountability.

The *Standard* writer uses the Boston church to challenge his own Christian Church folk. "Many of our churches could be classified as dead or dying," he writes, and he calls on his people to repent and start doing more for Jesus. *We should wake up!*, he tells them, and if we don't, he adds, we might not be around in a few years.. "Lookout! The Bostonians are coming," he warns. He goes on to say that if this new movement captures some of their members, we should understand that they are tired of dead churches and want to do something for Jesus.

Perhaps it is too much to expect our people to respond in a similar way to one of our own avant garde groups. We are reluctant to change and to learn from others, especially from our own who venture beyond the traditional paths. The Boston church, which spends its money on the poor and on missions rather than elegant edifices (They have not yet erected their first building), has a lot to teach us. I was surprised when a professor of missions at Abilene went to Boston "to be trained" and is now working for them in Japan, but I admire him. He was an "expert" in missions, but he realized he did not know it all. May we too, like that humble professor, realize by the bowels of Christ that we might have a thing or two to learn.

Somebody is going to have to drag us kicking and screaming into the 21st century, or as the *Standard* writer put it, we may not be around in a few years. Who knows but what it might be the Bostonians. The Lord pulls surprises on us like that, you know. —*the Editor*

Are Men Changing About Women?

Christian women have much to be encouraged about. This same church that enforces the subordination of women through its formal authority structure is now peopled by men who, in their personal relations with women, are beginning to repudiate the principle of male authority. It is common to see our Christian men exercising authority with restraint resembling reluctance. Indeed, it would appear that many church men would genuinely welcome women to the ministry if they could be convinced from Scripture that the traditional exclusion of women is wrong. Many of them are the fathers who raised this educated generation of women; the younger men were our peers in Sunday school and are now our friends, our brothers, and our husbands. When in their company alone, the issue of subordination becomes irrelevant because they already practice spiritual and temporal equality with women. —Faith Martin in *Call Me Blessed*

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WHAT JESUS THOUGHT ABOUT WOMEN

Jeanenne Nichols

The Man said to the Lord in the judgment, “Master, you gave me five talents, and I have increased them to ten.” The Master replied, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter the joy of your Master.”

The Man said, “You gave me two talents and I have increased them to four.” The Master replied, “Well, done, good and faithful servant, enter the joy of your Master.”

The Woman said, “You gave me five talents and I wanted to use them and increase them, but the Men of the church told me I couldn’t use them, so with grief, frustration and inward struggle, I hid them. I’m sorry, Master, I desperately wanted to serve you.”

“You are sorry?,” the Lord said to her, “Is that all you can say, that you’re sorry?” Then he said, “Take the talents from her and cast the worthless servant into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

This recurring vision has haunted me for ten years now. I have read Jesus, Paul, Faith Martin, Jay Treat, Carol Gilligan, Letha Scanzoni, Nancy Haresty, Carol Christ, Judith Plaskow, Paul Tournier, F. F. Bruce, and others, but still I do not have the answers I seek. I have asked the heavenly Father to reveal what his will is for me in his Body. I have asked myself if men are going to be allowed to do things in heaven that women can't do. Will women be submissive to men in heaven?

In Mt. 11:11 Jesus tells me that the least in the kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist. If I as a woman am least in the kingdom, I am greater than at least one man, and a preacher at that! When Mt. 24:40 refers to our Lord's return to earth, there is no sexual distinction made between whom will be taken and whom will be left.

Jesus is my personal Savior. I know him through grace, prayer, and study of the Scriptures, and he has laid these questions on my heart.

When God entered into history and became incarnate women were oppressed and treated as objects to be used for man's individually decided pleasure. Of all human beings Jesus knew what it was to be oppressed. In Luke 4 he was rejected in the town where he grew up, but he nonetheless indentified what his mission would be:

> The Spirit is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Lk. 4:18-19)

Satan foiled God's original plan for males and females. In Gen. 1:27 God "blessed *them* and said to *them*, 'be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and cover every living creature that moves on the ground.'" The equal ruling over the earth was God's plan in the beginning, but when sin entered it brought with it consequences. The consequence of sin for the woman was "Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you" (Gen. 3:16). But Gal. 3:13 tells us that those who believe in Christ are redeemed from the curse of the law.

This is why we see Jesus over and over releasing the oppressed females and breaking the tradition which bound them. In his day tradition forced women into a role less than human. This is why the Samaritan woman asked Jesus, "How is it you a Jew ask a drink of water from me, a Samaritan and a woman?" The disciples marveled that Jesus broke with tradition by talking with a woman.

Jesus not only broke tradition, but he broke the law of Moses in order to bring grace, forgiveness, and equality to women (and men). In John 8 we read of how the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman to Jesus caught in the act of adultery. Since she was caught in the act, we may wonder why they did not bring the man as well. They called for her to be stoned to death, quoting from Lev. 20:10. But they misused that law, for it called for the stoning of both the adulterer and the adulteress. Jesus' response was to give the woman repentance and life.

In both of these examples Jesus shows us that it is possible for a man to talk with and be compassionate to a woman without lusting for her. He treated these women as human beings, as equals.

Jesus' breaking of both tradition and the law might disturb us, but we are to remember the story of the Transfiguration. When Peter saw Jesus talking with Elijah and Moses, he called for the building of shelters for all three of them. But God spoke to them and to us all, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him." Listen to him, not the law or tradition!

Are we willing to listen to Jesus on the way women are to be treated? —*Mrs. Nichols. who lives at:1310 Summoner Lane. Abilene. TX 79602, dedicates this essay to her mother, Amber Herriman Yadon, and her grandmother Susie Cobb Yadon, who in hearing the call of the Master "chose what was better and it will not be taken away from her" (Lk.l0:42).*

An Ancient Prayer

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth,
From the laziness that is content with half-truths,
From the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,
God of Truth, deliver us."

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

During my final visit to Houston my doctor said my recovery was “Excellent” and that I need no further treatment. He dismissed me to a urologist in Dallas, who is also a cancer specialist. Even though my surgeon is “80% certain” that the cancer will not return, I should have a check-up every six months, “just to be sure.” He added, “You never know what cancer will do.” That is good advice for us all, I presume. Ouida and I are thankful to have this behind us and to get on to other things, and again we appreciate the loving concern of many of you.

Now and again in this column through the years I have mentioned the Church of Christ at Denton (later called Fellowship Church of Christ) of which Ouida and I were members. We had readers of this journal from allover the country to visit us through the years. Being a church freer than most we had lots of exciting experiences together. After a history of 15 years our elders decided that we were on an irreversible decline of membership and recommended that we disband before it became discouraging to a faithful few. The congregation, still more than50 members, voted to disband. This was due in part to the fact that we would be warmly welcomed by at least one other Church of Christ in town. We did an unusual thing in that we set the Sunday that would be our last and invited all our former members to return for one last service, including those who had moved away. Our last service was one of the greatest in that we made it a celebration of thanksgiving for 15 years of service. The very next Sunday Ouida and I placed membership at the Singing Oaks Church of Christ. Many others have done likewise.

An amusing incident (or is it sad?) grew out of that. Another church in town that is apparently unhappy with both Singing Oaks and me ran a notice in their bulletin to the effect that “Leroy and Ouida Garrett had placed membership at Singing Oaks” and that our acceptance by that church is “further confirmation of the degree to which Singing Oaks congregation have set their course away from the Truth.” The amusing part was Ouida’s reaction, who for the first time in all these years was included by name along with me in such a putdown. Her words were classic, “I have at last arrived!” But I shook my head in disbelief: a church turns from the truth by accepting Ouida? By accepting an old rebel like me, that’s reasonable. But Ouida?

That incident raises an issue that is crucial in understanding the nature of the church. May a true church of Jesus Christ choose its members, accepting some and rejecting others? If the church is the Body of Christ, belonging to him and not to us, can it reject any member that belongs to that Body on grounds of race, color, economic status, or doctrinal opinion? I venture this proposition: *A member may choose a congregation, but a congregation may not choose its members.* I further venture that a church that presumes to select its members is a sect or a cult. The only test we can lay down for fellowship and membership with any baptized believer is loyalty to Jesus Christ.

I try to keep our readers informed about at least some of the new journals that emerge among Churches of Christ, and they keep emerging. One such, which began this year, is *Gospel Truths* (Box 906087, Tulsa, Ok. 74112, published monthly, $10 per annum). It is slick, colorful, attractive, and features numerous writers, representing a more conservative view. Its June issue has an article by J. T. Smith, the editor, entitled "Leroy Garrett's Grace Extends Further Than God's." I take it that the editor is saying more than he intends, for God's grace is boundless and incomparable. If he means that I am wrong about some things that concern him, that is plausible, but that my grace (or anyone's grace) extends beyond God's is a serious theological misstatement. I might not forgive the editor for that, but God will!

Billy Graham's office has announced that he has accepted an invitation for a preaching crusade in Scotland next summer. In an unusual move the General Assembly of the state church of that country, The Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) voted to support the invitation to Graham. One church official commented, "At this time in our country we have a high degree of secularism. I can't think of anyone more successful in making the gospel plain to all and sundry. I am encouraged that so many fragments of the Christian church are concerned to witness for one Lord."

There have been seven unity sessions between Churches of Christ and Christian Churches called Restoration Forum over the past few years. These have been encouraging to those who have attended, and there have been signs of a restoration of brotherly kindness. The eighth forum is scheduled for Nov. 7-9 at the Garnett Church of Christ in Tulsa, and the emphasis will be on evangelism. All who believe in our Lord's prayer for the unity of his people should rejoice that these forums are being held. To keep in touch write to Don DeWelt, Box 1132, Joplin, Mo. 64802.

You will remember that this journal is not published in July and August. The next issue will be the September number. This will give me more time this summer to work on a new series that begins next January on what the Old Testament means to us. I have a few short assignments away from home, however, including taking part in a program at Pittman Creek Church of Christ in Dallas on July 11 and doing a retreat for the Brookvalley Church of Christ in Atlanta, Aug. 24-26.

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READER'S EXCHANGE

As for your piece on the nature of heresy, I am pleased to learn that Augustine, W. K. Pendleton, and Leroy Garrett agree with me. I have held that a heretic is a divisive person, not simply one who is wrong on some doctrine. I may be right, but if I drive' someone out who doesn't see it my way, I am a heretic. And I maybe wrong, but if I do not make it a test of fellowship and welcome those who disagree with me, I am not a heretic. —*Harold Fox, Edgar, Nebraska*

I appreciate the fact that you have not clammed up in the face of adversity all these years. As a young (24) Bible student facing persecution for untraditional beliefs, it is good to see some rethinking among us, and it is good to know that others have gone before me to set the winds of change in motion. —*David Brown, Florence, Alabama*

Sectarianism offers man confusion and frustration and causes his spirit to be in a constant state of agitation and fear. Jesus Christ offers man salvation, abundant living, and the peace that passes understanding. While many people realize this, they fail to distinguish between Christ and our system, and with good reason. Trying to convert people to our system is not preaching the gospel. —*J. J. Albert, Corcoran, Ca.*

I renew with sincere gratitude for your excellent publication and for your personal and editorial support of "Wrestling With God." Encouragement like you have given kept our spirit high as we struggled to fund the film. —*Margaret Wilkes, North Hollywood, Ca.*

(This gives me occasion to again recommend "Wrestling With God," which is on the life of Alexander Campbell in his formative years. Ouida and I viewed it with great appreciation, and I showed it to my history class at Dallas Christian College. The students said it really made history come alive. You can still order the film at $59.95 plus $3.00 postage from Wrestling With God, Box 761, North Hollywood, Ca. 91603. —*Ed.*)

I continue to be blessed by such articles as "Are You Tired of Trying To Go To Heaven?" I am trying hard to overcome my programmed thoughts of works only. Only God through His infinite mercy and grace will allow this lowly publican through the gates of heaven, not through any good works I may do. —*David Aechternacht, Irving Texas*

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BOOK NOTES

We now have seven bound volumes of this journal, from 1977-88. There are five double volumes (two years in each) and two single volumes (one year in each). That covers our last 12 years, up to 1989, and there is a lot of stuff that we believe will interest you. We have a special price of $65.00 for them all, postpaid. Or you can order a volume at a time: single volumes $5.95, double volumes $12.50. They are *Principles of Unity and Fellowship (1977); The Ancient Order* (1978); *Blessed Are The Peacemakers; With All The Mind (197980);Jesus Today* (1981-82); *The Doe Of The Dawn* (1983-84); *Adventures Of The Early Church* 1985-86); *The Sense of Scripture: Studies In Interpretation* (1987-88). The next double volume, *The Hope of the Believer* (1989-90), will be added next year, and may be reserved in advance.

We continue to reserve copies of *Pilgrimage of Joy,* which is Carl Ketcherside's auto-biography at $15.00. It is due to be published late this year.

You can get a free copy of *The Stone-Campbell Movement,* by Leroy Garrett, which is a history of Churches of Christ, Christian Churches, and Disciples of Christ, when you send us a club of six subs to this journal (new or renewal, including your own) at $4.00 each, $24.00 total. You must request the book.

Especially for newer readers we offer you 18 back issues of this paper, selected at random by us from many years past, so that you can get an idea of what we have been saying. Only $4.00 postpaid.

If you want to read some exciting stuff about what our pioneers said about some of the issues that continue to divide us, we recommend *Endangered Heritage: An Examination of Church of Christ Doctrine* by Walt Yancey, a book that deserves honest study even if it has made some folk unhappy. $12.95 postpaid.

Raccoon John Smith by Louis Cochran has been republished and is available at $12.95 postpaid. It is a fabulously interesting story of one of our great pioneer preachers and it is rich in Americana.

Our next issue will be the September number.

Subscription Rates: $6.00 per year or two years for $10.00. In clubs of three or more (sent to separate addresses by us) $4.00 per name per year. Foreign: $8.00 yr.

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